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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000004

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TAGS: PREL PGOV TU

SUBJECT: TURKISH CONCERNS ON IRAQ, ARMENIAN GENOCIDE
RESOLUTION AND SHARED VISION IMPLEMENTATION

REF: 06 ANKARA 6764

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4(b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Turkey will continue closely to cooperate with the US on Iraq and hopes Washington will share its evolving thinking prior to any public announcements, newly promoted MFA U/S Apakan told Ambassador December 30. After repeating remarks on Iraq made December 27 to the DCM (reftel), Apakan downplayed the significance of PM Erdogan,s public call for a timetable for US withdrawal, but argued that more clearly stating an intention for foreign forces ultimately to leave Iraq would undercut insurgents, support among the population. Apakan urged a strong administration effort against the Armenian genocide resolution. He noted the slow progress in arranging consultations called for in the Shared Vision document released by the Secretary and FM Gul in July and suggested that we develop soon a schedule of events. Ambassador described Embassy Baghdad,s efforts to coalesce moderate leaders around more effective policies, called on Turkey to open channels with the Iraqi Kurdish leadership, and said there must be no surprises on northern Iraq/the PKK. He anticipated a strong Administration effort against any Armenian genocide resolution and called on Turkey to take actions to improve its position on the issue. Ambassador acknowledged that the Shared Vision effort still needs work and noted upcoming high level consultations planned or potentially in the works. End Summary.

Iraq

¶2. (C) Apakan described Turkey,s priorities looking ahead on Iraq, using the same language reported reftel. He particularly stressed Iraq,s territorial integrity and unity, law and order/security, restoration of the right balance among Iraq,s communities, continued efforts to draw Sunni extremists into politics, and working more effectively to counter PKK terrorism emanating from northern Iraq into Turkey. Apakan emphasized Ankara,s interest in cooperating closely with the US on all Iraq-related issues. Turkey hopes that the US will share its ideas and evolving thinking before announcements are made, including regarding any change in the disposition of US forces on which there should be consultations. MFA Iraq Coordinator Celikkol will visit Washington in January for this purpose, and FM Gul hopes to continue this if the Secretary can receive him in February. Turkey will continue to pursue the next meeting of the Neighbors of Iraq foreign ministers in Baghdad or Cairo, whichever venue can be accomplished soonest. Participation

in such talks by UNSC Perm-5 representatives would help to isolate Iran and reassure the Gulf and other states in the area.

¶3. (C) Ambassador asked how we should understand PM Erdogan,s call for a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign forces, complaining that it was not helpful for us to be out of sync on such a key matter. An obviously uncomfortable Apakan suggested that what Erdogan meant was that the conditions (vice a specific timetable with dates) for the withdrawal of US and other foreign forces should be more clearly talked about. This would undercut radicals who currently garner support in a fight against foreign occupation, and help draw outliers into the political system. But Turkey does not want to see any precipitate withdrawal that would lead to a power vacuum. Any changes in Coalition forces should be incremental, and Ankara wants there to be no surprises in this area.

¶4. (C) Ambassador expressed appreciation for Apakan,s review of Turkey,s Iraq policy and strong intention to cooperate closely with the US. As the President reviews different ideas and options, Turkey,s support and cooperation would continue to be helpful. Ambassador described efforts over the last month in Baghdad to strengthen a moderate core of leaders who could support and buttress more effective decision making and action by PM Maliki,s government. While inclusion remains an interest, the implication of this effort is less emphasis on drawing into the system those who continue to be opposed to it. We hope that Turkey will back our and the moderates, efforts. Ambassador urged engagement with Iraq,s Kurdish leaders -- the absence of which has undermined Turkey,s interests in Iraq. He defended the

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Ralston initiative, stressed our commitment to working with Turkey on the PKK, and cautioned against any surprises by Turkey vis--vis the Turkey/northern Iraq border.

Armenian Genocide Resolution

¶5. (C) Apakan reviewed familiar Turkish concerns regarding a possible congressional resolution on the fate of Armenians at the end of World War I. He said the issue should not be a platform for poisoning US-Turkish relations at a critical time for our cooperation on Iraq and other regional priorities. PM Erdogan had told President Bush in October that passage of a resolution would mean problems for our cooperation and appreciated the President,s response. Ankara hopes there will be a real effort by the Administration against such a resolution and hopes to cooperate closely with the US on the matter.

¶6. (C) Ambassador responded that he anticipates no change in the approach to the issue taken by the last several US Administrations of both parties. Our opposition to a genocide resolution will remain, but so will the President,s acknowledgement that among the many tragedies of WWI, as many as 1.5 million Armenian Ottoman citizens were driven to forced exile and death. Ambassador looked forward to working with the Turkish embassy in Washington and government in Ankara on the matter, and he urged more effective GOT outreach to key US constituencies and leaders who have been helpful to Turkey in the past. Ankara should consider actions it can take now to garner support, including with respect to Armenia. Ambassador also observed that the Executive Branch cannot ultimately tell the Legislative Branch what to do. If, at the end of the day, a resolution passes one or both houses of Congress, our job will be to manage the consequences in ways that will enable us to continue working together on critical issues where we share common interests.

Shared Vision

¶7. (C) Apakan expressed disappointment that more had not been

done to energize US-Turkish dialogue as called for in the Shared Vision paper released by the Secretary and FM Gul in July. He did not want to assign blame for this and acknowledged that Turkey could have done more, too. Looking ahead, Apakan urged that a schedule be drawn up for consultations in 2007 on the issues identified for collaboration in the Vision paper, including on trade and investment, exchanges, and key policy issues. Apakan also noted FM Gul's interest in meeting with the Secretary in February.

¶ 8. (C) Ambassador said that he had forwarded Gul's request to see the Secretary in February; there would be no reply until after the holidays. He said Apakan's suggestion that we develop a specific plan for bilateral consultations was helpful and he would discuss it with Washington. He noted that the first meeting of the Economic Policy Commission in many years is now planned for early February. We hope to reschedule NEA PDAS Jeffrey's consultations in Ankara for early in 2007 and also want to move ahead with USNATO Ambassador Nuland's visit, which had been postponed at Turkey's request in the run-up to Riga. Ambassador also noted that there is discussion in Washington about possible travel to the region by U/S Burns and/or EUR A/S Fried, and he said we will advise Ankara as matters develop.

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